

Wholehearted Worship

Session 4: Worship & Witness

Notes

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The Myth of “Seeker Sensitive” Worship

Harold Best, in his book Unceasing Worship

“... we do not bring unsaved friends to the corporate gathering because of our procrastination or our mistaken ideas that “worship” is for believers while witness and evangelism are reserved for other times and places.”

...

“The secret is not in talking baby talk to the unredeemed and adult talk to the converted, nor in seeking a happy medium between the two ... The secret lies in the authority, the conviction, the unswerving bluntness of all truth preached, sung and written.”

Do you tend to censor your worship in the company of unbelievers? Why do you consciously or subconsciously do that?

Worship that Cannot Stay Silent

John 4:26-29

²⁶ Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.” ²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, “What do you want?” or “Why are you talking with her?” ²⁸ Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ²⁹ “Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?”

Upon discovering the true identity of Christ, all her inhibition became irrelevant. Her worship overflowed and people noticed her conviction.

She wasn't trying to be 'effective' in her strategy. Her worship naturally overflowed and it worked.

John 4:30, 39-42

³⁰ They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

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³⁹ Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, “He told me everything I ever did.” ⁴⁰ So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. ⁴¹ And because of his words many more became believers. ⁴² They said to the woman, “We no longer believe just because of

what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we
know that this man really is the Savior of the world.””

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Worship as an Active Witness: Halal

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HALAL

To praise, boast, be boastful

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Psalm 22:22

I will declare Your name to My brethren;
In the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

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A boast is praise that has an audience.

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When you boast about something, you are basically telling
someone that the object of your ‘halal’ is the best.

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Genesis 12:14-15

¹⁴ So it was, when Abram came into Egypt, that the
Egyptians saw the woman, that she *was* very beautiful. ¹⁵
The princes of Pharaoh also saw her and commended
(halal) her to Pharaoh. And the woman was taken to
Pharaoh’s house.

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Sarah was apparently so beautiful in the eyes of the Egyptians that
the princes of Pharaoh couldn’t help but halal her beauty.

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2 Samuel 14:25

²⁵ Now in all Israel there was no one who was praised as
much as Absalom for his good looks. From the sole of his
foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.

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Absalom was so good looking, the best looking in all of Israel that
there was no one who was ‘halal’-ed as much as him for their
appearance.

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Natural Evangelism

All of us are proselytizing people around us to something. No one strategises in their mind how to talk about their latest travel adventures or interests. It naturally comes out.

What are some things you naturally get excited to want to tell people about? Could you apply that to your faith in Christ?

Worship as a Passive Witness

Perhaps the stories of Daniel and the 3 Hebrew boys living in secular Babylon have more parallels and relatability to our time and place now as we live amongst a secular state and government.

Do we bow to the idols of the land or do we stand firm in our unwavering allegiance to the Lord?

King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold

Daniel 3:4-6

⁴ Then the herald proclaimed, "Nations and peoples of every language, this is what you are commanded to do: ⁵ As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe, and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. ⁶ Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.

King Nebuchadnezzar’s response to the Lord’s Salvation over the 3 boys

Daniel 3:28-29

28 Then Nebuchadnezzar said, “Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king’s command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. 29 Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way.”

Darius to Daniel before he is tossed into the den of lions

Daniel 6:16

... gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!”

Darius’ response to the Lord’s salvation

Daniel 6:20-22, 25-26

20 When he came near the den, he called to Daniel in an anguished voice, “Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to rescue you from the lions? 21 Daniel answered, “May the king live forever! 22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me, because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor have I ever done any wrong before you, your Majesty.” ... 25 Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth: “May you prosper greatly! 26 “I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and revere the God of Daniel.

“For he is the living God
and he endures forever;
his kingdom will not be destroyed,
his dominion will never end.
27 He rescues and he saves;
he performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth.
He has rescued Daniel
from the power of the lions.”

Notice that the faithful serving and worship from these Israelite young men overflowed into a witness to their society, so much so that the pagan kings of the time would utter praise to Jehovah.

The Pattern: Distinct Lives to Directed Glory

Quite often in the Bible we see commands given to use with a tag at the end of it clearly showing that it is a signpost for the unbeliever in the world.

John 14:34-35

³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

Matthew 5:14-16

14 “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

1 Peter 2:12

¹² Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Daniel 6:3-4

³ Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. ⁴ At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent.

We are called to live lives that are unmistakably full of integrity that even those who want to find fault with us will be unable to and eventually have to glorify our Father in heaven.

Deuteronomy 4:6-8

⁵ See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. ⁶ Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." ⁷ What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the Lord our God is near us whenever we pray to him? ⁸ And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

From these passages we see a pattern:

1. Our worship leads us to live distinct lives from the cultures we live in.
2. And in so doing, we draw the attention of people not unto ourselves, but unto the one who calls us to such distinct lives.
3. Then, the unbeliever is compelled to give glory to our Father in heaven.

All of us, whether actively or passively, in our worship, are pointing people to the thing that we worship. We are like signposts, pointing people to the very thing we give ultimate worth to. The thing is, are we pointing people to Him?

Application: Focus on Fuel, not Form

If we hyperfocus on instantaneous change, we run the risk of focusing on the form instead of focusing on the fuel.

Remember, having the form that is empty is meaningless. We need to bring ourselves back to the start, to the matter of the heart and to the matter of Lordship.

Is He on the throne of our hearts, and do we understand who He fully is? Do we understand that He is the spring of living water of which the thirst of every man and woman will only be satisfied through Him, or do we think He is only for 'some' people? Do we recognise His fingerprints of matchless goodness all over our life script and look at our colleague with the longing of 'if only you could taste and see that the Lord is good'.

Who is the Lord to you?

The worst thing we could do is to witness through our lackluster worship. Imagine yourself as a non-believer hearing a Christian talk about their supposed 'good, all powerful, faithful, loving God' with a half-baked conviction, would you want that?

Psalm 96:1-6

¹ Oh, sing to the Lord a new song!

Sing to the Lord, all the earth.

² Sing to the Lord, bless His name;

Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.

³ Declare His glory among the [a]nations,

His wonders among all peoples.

⁴ For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised;

He is to be feared above all gods.

⁵ For all the gods of the peoples are idols,

But the Lord made the heavens.

⁶ Honor and majesty are before Him;

Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary.

Friedrich Nietzsche, Atheist and fierce critic of Christianity

“Show me that you are redeemed, and I will believe in your redeemer.”

Could it be that Friedrich continued disbelief in an all powerful God because he did not come across a Christian whose life pointed people undeniably to the redemption of our Saviour? Could he have made that statement as a criticism against Christians who preached about a redeemer but had no redeemed life to show for it?

Reflection Questions

- What do my everyday conversations naturally reveal that I value most? If someone listened to me this past week, would they conclude that Jesus is my greatest treasure?
- When was the last time my worship—whether through my words, my character, or my actions—caused someone to become curious about Christ? If it hasn't, why might that be?
- Am I more concerned with making my faith acceptable to others, or with faithfully pointing people to Jesus, even when it feels uncomfortable?
- Looking back over this course, what is the greatest obstacle preventing my worship from overflowing into a natural witness to those around me?
- If I truly believed that Jesus is infinitely worthy and that every person around me desperately needs Him, what would I begin doing differently this week?